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King calls for investigation into infant death

Media reports say 2-week old boy died while being detained by Customs and Border Protection

Washington, D.C. (Friday, February 15, 2008)—Today, U.S. Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY), Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, called for an investigation into the death of Michael Tony Futi, an infant, who was in the custody of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the Honolulu International Airport.

In a letter released today, King asks the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Inspector General to conduct an immediate investigation of the incident.

“This appears to be a terrible tragedy, and my heart goes out to the family,” King said. “CBP is charged with keeping our country secure, and I have a great deal of respect for the job that they do. But this entire matter must be fully investigated.”

Reports indicate that the incident occurred on Friday, February 8, 2008, while the two-week old infant, his mother, and a nurse were traveling from American Samoa to Hawaii so the child could undergo urgent heart surgery. The three travelers were apparently placed in a holding cell for approximately a half hour due to an alleged problem with the visa waiver issued for the boy’s mother.

Thus far, CBP has refused to comment publicly on the matter.

“I am requesting that your office review this situation immediately to determine the chain of events that led to the death, the rationale for detaining the infant and nurse (both of whom are United States citizens) and the CBP procedures and policies to recommend changes, if appropriate, to ensure that a tragedy such as this does not happen again,” King wrote.

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